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IMPORT PRACTICES IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: A REVIEW OF TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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• ABSTRACT :-

The hotel industry relies on a stream of products and services such as food, drinks, furniture, fixtures, equipment, linens, technology, guest comforts, maintenance supplies and special operating items. Hotels used to buy from local suppliers.. Because the world is more connected guests expect more international hotel rules are stricter products are more specialized and big hotel chains grow, the need to source products from abroad and import them has grown. Importing gives hotels access to quality items, specialized gear, global brands, cheaper prices and uniform products. Yet importing also brings challenges: customs rules, taxes, changes in currency value, transport delays, paperwork, quality issues, supply breaks and worries about the environment.

This paper shows the trends and problems that come with importing for the hotel industry. The review pulls together data from studies on hotel buying and supply chains. Eight other works that talk about taxes, online reviews, economic downturns, strategy, change in organizations how customers feel, money matters and staff happiness. The paper says that good hotel importing is no longer just buying. Good hotel importing is now a part of the supply chain that needs good supplier relationships, online buying tools, risk control, environmental checks, money planning and a flexible organization. The paper also notes that little is known about hotel importing as a management task, especially in small Indian cities.

Keywords: hotel industry, import practices, hotel procurement, international sourcing, supply chain management, supplier management, e-procurement, tariffs, sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION :-

The hotel industry is often called a service industry. The way hotels provide their services depends a lot on getting the right physical items. Hotels need food ingredients, drinks, sheets, uniforms, furniture, kitchen tools, electrical items, cleaning supplies, things for guests, computer equipment, parts for repairs, decorations and many other products. Because of this buying these items is very important for how a hotel runs.

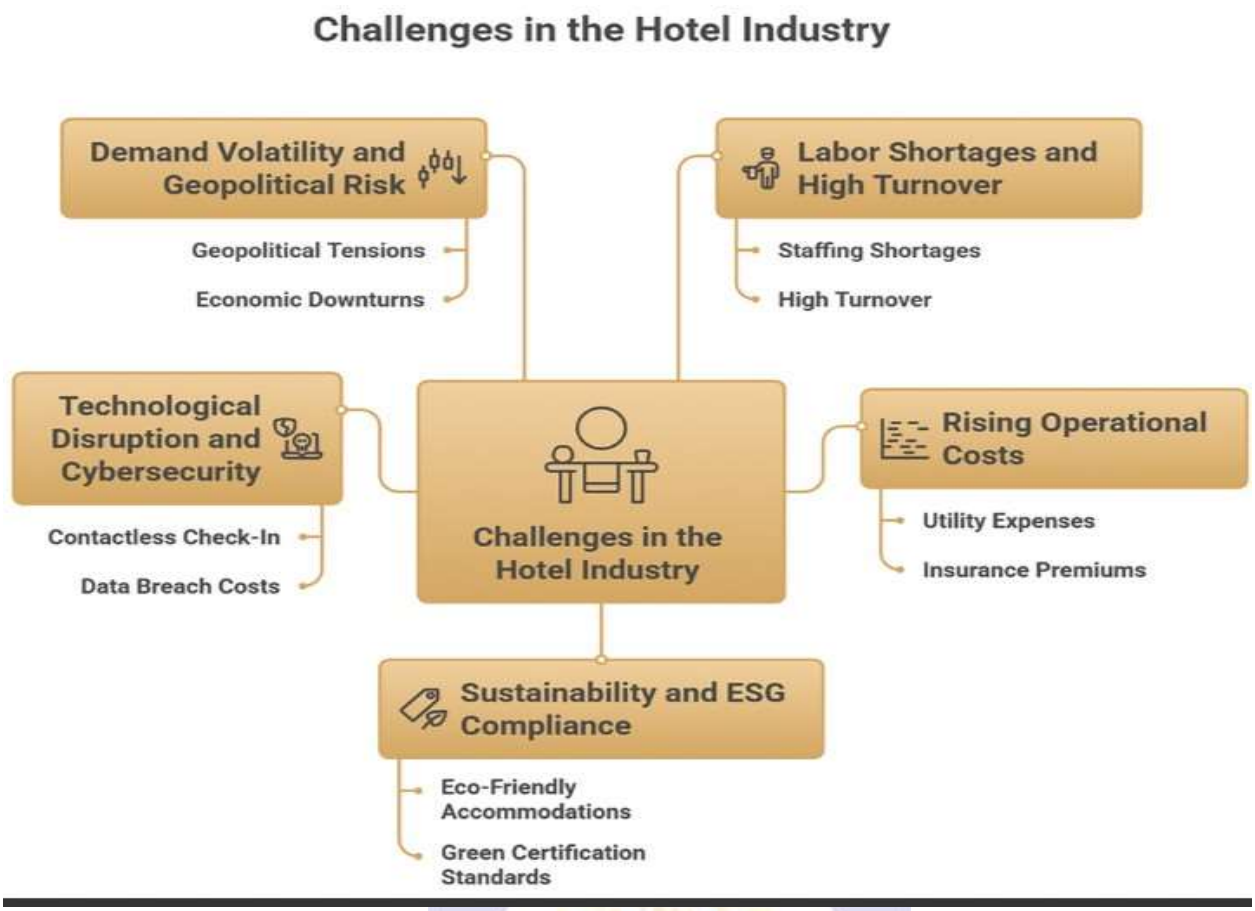
In years buying things for hotels has become more complicated because hotels work with both local and global suppliers. Big hotel companies might require items, tools or design choices that are not easy to find from local companies. High-end hotels might also bring in food, furniture, bathroom items, lights, kitchen tools, technology and things for guests. Getting these items from countries can be key to keeping the same standards and standing out in the busy hotel business.

Getting things from countries is not just about finding a supplier. A hotel needs to think about the details of the product how reliable the supplier is, shipping from one country to another dealing with customs paying taxes making sure the items are safe dealing with money changes how long it takes to get the items checking the quality how to pay and what to do if the supply gets stopped. These international trade steps can make buying more difficult and more expensive. The World Trade Organization said in 2017 that making trade easier and better can help reduce delays and costs.

Kothari and others looked at using computers to buy things in hotel supply chains. Said that using technology is very important for buying. Their study showed that using computers can help with buying and can help hotels in other ways. This is especially true when hotels are buying from countries because getting items from far away needs to track orders, suppliers, things in stock, papers and how the items are sent.

The need for steady supply chains became very obvious during the COVID-19 virus. Hotels saw fewer people coming at the time as problems getting supplies trouble moving things around and money problems. Rini and Fikri said that hotels need to be stronger more able to change and ready for problems.

With all this in mind this paper looks at what's happening and what problems exist in getting things from other countries for hotels. It also connects this topic with research, about buying things managing a business, taxes, how people act, changing how a company works how well a company does financially and managing workers.



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2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW :-

The major objectives of this review are:

To examine the role of imports and international sourcing in hotel procurement.

To identify emerging trends in hotel import and purchasing practices.

To analyse the major operational, financial, regulatory, and organizational challenges associated with hotel imports.

To integrate the eight specified research papers with the broader hotel procurement literature.

To identify research gaps and suggest directions for future research on hotel import practices.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :-

Here is a paper that uses a narrative literature review approach. The authors chose literature around five topics: hotel procurement, supplier management, e-procurement, sustainable supply chains and supply-chain resilience. In addition, to the hospitality and supply-chain literature the authors added eight specific studies. Those studies look at taxation, reviews, recession, strategic management organizational change, consumer perception, financial performance and job satisfaction. The authors do not claim that all of those studies examine hotel imports. Instead the authors use the findings to build an understanding of the economic strategic financial, consumer and organizational factors that shape hotel import decisions. The review is qualitative and narrative not a meta-analysis. The authors combine the findings by recurring themes and show how they matter for hotel procurement and international sourcing.



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4. CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF IMPORT PRACTICES IN HOTELS :-

When reviewing hotel import practices it is evident a systematic process. In this process a hotel first identifies a purchasing requirement. Next the hotel evaluates suppliers. Then the hotel negotiates purchasing conditions. After that the hotel arranges transportation and customs clearance. The hotel then. Inspects imported products. Finally the hotel incorporates those imported products into hotel operations.

The basic hotel import process can be represented as follows:

Requirement Identification → Supplier Search → Supplier Evaluation → Negotiation → Purchase Order → International Transportation → Customs Clearance → Quality Inspection → Receiving and Inventory → Payment → Supplier Performance Evaluation.

This list shows each step in the order the hotel must follow.

Unlike purchasing international procurement brings extra considerations. These include customs procedures, import duties, foreign exchange, transportation risks, documentation, country-of-origin requirements and longer delivery periods.

Salihoğlu and Gezici (2018) studied where suppliers are located in the hospitality sector. They showed how important supplier location and purchasing relationships are. Their research tells that hotels should not automatically think international suppliers are better, than suppliers. Instead the sourcing decision should rest on product availability, quality, price, total landed cost, supplier capability and strategic requirements.

Therefore a hotel should compare international suppliers by looking at total landed cost. The hotel must not rely on the supplier's quoted price.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :-

5.1 E-Procurement and Digitalization

Kothari and his colleagues looked at e-procurement as a tool for managing hotel supply chains. They found that electronic procurement systems can make buying easier and give hotels advantages. This is especially useful for hotel imports because buying from abroad means working with suppliers many purchase orders, many invoices, many shipping papers and many inventory records.

Later Kothari and his colleagues studied e-procurement in a hotel chain. They discovered that standardizing how purchases are made is an important issue, for the organization. The work shows that technology alone does not change procurement. The organization must also set rules and help employees learn how to use the system.

For hotel imports digital procurement can help hotels see their suppliers better manage purchase orders, control inventory keep records and communicate clearly.. The system needs staff to learn managers to support it good data and rules that everyone follows.

5.2 Supplier Relationships and Strategic Sourcing

Shi and Liao (2013) looked at how hotels, restaurants and suppliers work in the supply chain. Their research showed that trust, dependence, teamwork and the overall quality of relationships matter a lot in hospitality supply chains. This is especially true when dealing with sourcing. When suppliers are located abroad lead times tend to be longer and coordination becomes more complex. A hotel may not be able to switch to another supplier if a shipment from overseas gets delayed.

Aksoy and Akın Ateş (2019) studied how hotels in Turkey manage their purchasing strategies. They found that supplier development and smart purchasing choices play a role in improving performance.. It's not enough just to have long-term relationships. The actual value and quality of these relationships must be carefully checked. Hotels need to focus on what each supplier can offer, not just how long they've been working together.

Because of this international hotel suppliers should be judged using measurable standards. These include:

Product quality,Delivery reliability,Price stability,Responsiveness,Certification,Compliance, Sustainablity,Innovation capability,Stability

These criteria help hotels make better decisions when choosing suppliers abroad. They ensure that partnerships are strong, dependable and effective, in the run.

5.3 Supplier Geography and Local Versus International Sourcing

Salihoğlu and Gezici (2018) investigated supplier geography in the hospitality sector. Their research highlights the importance of local supplier relationships and the economic effects created by hotel purchasing.

This raises an important strategic question: When should a hotel import and when should it purchase locally?

Imports may be appropriate when a product is unavailable domestically, when international brand standards require a specific product, when imported quality is substantially higher, or when specialized international equipment is required.

Domestic sourcing may be preferable when products are highly perishable, when immediate delivery is important, when customs costs are high, or when domestic suppliers can provide comparable quality.

Thus, hotel managers should make sourcing decisions based on total value rather than simply selecting the supplier with the lowest quoted price.

5.4 Green Procurement and Sustainability

Al-Aomar and Hussain from the year 2017 looked at practices in hotel supply chains and showed that being environmentally responsible when buying things is becoming more important.

Others in 2019 studied lean-green practices and how they affect sustainable performance in hotel supply chains. Their results show that quality management reducing waste taking care of equipment being friendly and other improvements in operations can help achieve sustainable performance.

Migdadi from 2023 looked at supply-chain practices in the hotel industry and found that green procurement being committed to the environment, green quality management and internal environmental processes are key parts of sustainable hotel supply chains.

Alreahi and others in 2023 did a review and showed that green supply-chain management has become an important area of research, in hospitality. However putting supply chains into practice is still hard because hotels work with many different people and companies.

When it comes to products that are brought in from places being sustainable means hotels need to check not just the environmental features of the product but also how far it traveled how it is packaged how much carbon it produces, what the supplier does and how it is disposed of.

5.5 Supply-Chain Resilience and Import Risk

It shows how fragile international supply chains can be. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that. Rini and Fikri (2022) studied supply chain resilience in the hotel industry and stressed that flexibility, disaster readiness and backup plans are vital.

Because of this international hotel sourcing should not rely heavily on a single supplier or a single country. Hotels can cut risk by:

Using suppliers

Choosing alternative suppliers within the country

Keeping safety stock for critical items

Assessing supplier risk

Having emergency procurement procedures

Using flexible contracts

Monitoring supplier performance regularly

New research in hospitality also shows that balance between international and local sourcing matters. Nyemba and Chikwere (2026) discovered that hotel firms use sourcing tactics, such, as single sourcing, dual sourcing, multiple sourcing, parallel sourcing and local sourcing. Local sourcing can lower logistics hassle and import costs and strong supplier relationships can help performance.

6. MAJOR TRENDS IN HOTEL IMPORT PRACTICES :-

6.1 Movement from Transactional Purchasing to Strategic Sourcing

It shows that Hotel purchasing move away from price-based buying, toward strategic sourcing. The data reveals Hotel purchasing now looking at quality, supplier reliability, sustainability, innovation, risk and long-term value.

6.2 Growth of Digital Procurement

Electronic procurement systems are becoming increasingly important. Digital systems can improve purchase-order management, supplier comparison, documentation, inventory visibility, and approval procedures.

6.3 Increased Use of Multiple Suppliers

Recent disruptions have pushed hotels to look beyond a supplier. Relying on suppliers helps hotels stay strong and avoid risks, in the supply chain. Multiple suppliers give hotels flexibility and make the business more stable.

6.4 Growing Importance of Sustainability

Considerations are becoming more and more part of how suppliers are chosen and how purchases are made. The hotels paying attention to sustainability to suppliers who act responsibly toward the environment to packaging to waste, to certifications and, to the impact of transportation.

6.5 Data-Based Supplier Evaluation

Hotels can increasingly use procurement data to evaluate suppliers on delivery time, quality, rejection rates, price changes, customer complaints, responsiveness, and sustainability.

6.6 Increasing Focus on Total Landed Cost

The purchase price does not fully capture the true cost of an imported product. Hotels must take into account factors. These include freight charges, insurance, duties, taxes, exchange rate fluctuations, customs fees, storage expenses, financing costs and possible losses due, to delivery delays. All these elements add up. Affect the final cost. That is why focusing on the purchase price can be misleading. A complete view of landed cost gives a clearer picture of what a product really costs. This helps hotels make buying decisions.

7. MAJOR CHALLENGES IN HOTEL IMPORT PRACTICES :-

7.1 Tariffs, Duties, and Taxes

Import duties and taxes can significantly change the final price of imported goods. Changes in tax policy can therefore affect sourcing decisions.

7.2 Customs and Documentation

Importing goods from countries needs the right paperwork and must follow customs rules. Mistakes, in documents can cause delays, extra fees or fines. It is important to get everything when preparing for international shipments.

7.3 Exchange-Rate Fluctuations

Hotels purchasing in foreign currencies face uncertainty because exchange-rate movements can increase the final domestic-currency cost of imported goods.

7.4 Long Lead Times

International transportation generally takes longer than domestic procurement. This can create problems when hotels require urgent supplies or replacement equipment.

7.5 Quality Problems

Imported products may sometimes fail to meet the required specifications. Quality inspection and supplier certification are therefore important.

7.6 Supplier Dependency

Relying on one international supplier can put hotels at risk. It is important to find suppliers, for essential products. This helps reduce the chances of disruption. Having backup options makes operations more stable.

7.7 Sustainability Concerns

Long-distance transportation and excessive packaging can increase the environmental impact of imported products.

7.8 Employee Skills

International procurement demands a range of skills including purchasing, finance, customs, logistics, technology and negotiation. When employees do not have the expertise mistakes become more likely. This can lead to costs and slower operations. It is important to have staff who understand these areas well. Without training the entire procurement process can suffer. Companies need to invest in employee development to avoid these problems. Having employees helps ensure smooth international trade. It also reduces the risk of delays and financial loss.

7.9 Demand Uncertainty

Economic downturns and sudden crises can reduce hotel occupancy and leave hotels with excess inventories. Import purchasing therefore needs to remain flexible.

8. RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE HOTEL IMPORT MANAGEMENT :-

Step 1: Identify the Requirement

First check if it's really need the product and if a good local option is available.

Step 2: Calculate Total Landed Cost

Next add up every cost, for the imported item: shipping, insurance, duties, taxes, customs fees, currency changes and storage.

Step 3: Evaluate Suppliers

Look at the supplier's quality, money health, certifications, size, how fast they deliver, their name and how quickly they reply.

Step 4: Develop Suppliers

Find suppliers for the products that are essential. Having, than one source helps avoid delays if one supplier has problems.

Step 5: Introduce Digital Procurement

Use computer tools to send orders save supplier information track inventory manage documents get approvals and handle payments. This makes the process faster. This reduces mistakes.

Step 6: Conduct Quality Assurance

Check samples read the specifications inspect the goods verify certificates and run tests before approving any orders. This ensures the products meet the required standards.

Step7: make sure all paperwork is correct,product is classified correctly, value is accurate,origin is listed,all rules are followed.

Step 8: Manage Inventory Risk

Check safety stock, for imported items. avoid piling up too much useless inventory.

Step 9: Include Sustainability Criteria

Not that how the product affects the planet people, price and quality when you choose it.

Step 10: Review Supplier Performance

Keep checking the supplier's performance by looking at quality, delivery speed, cost, reply time, eco-standards and trustworthiness.

9. RESEARCH GAPS :-

The literature shows that there are areas that still need more attention. First research on hotel procurement is fairly advanced.. Hotel import practices as a separate field of study have not been explored enough. Second there is a need for more real-world studies focused specifically on hotels in India. Most existing research has looked at hotel supply chains in countries like Turkey, the UAE, Indonesia, Zimbabwe and the United States. Fewer studies have looked at how imports work in hotels. Third it would be valuable to study sized hotels and hotels in smaller cities. The availability of suppliers, transportation systems, employee skills, purchasing power and access to suppliers can vary greatly between large metropolitan areas and smaller towns. Fourth future research should look into how the level of importing affects hotel results. This could include studying import spending, how quickly inventory turns over gross margins, overall profitability and cash flow. Fifth another area worth exploring is what guests think about imported goods compared to sourced ones. Research on guest perceptions could help hotels understand if international products really add value. Finally researchers might develop models to see how things, like tariffs, exchange rates, how concentrated suppliers are, lead times, sustainability efforts and digital buying methods impact hotel purchasing performance.

10. DISCUSSION :-

the studies proving that hotel importing is not an international buying assignment. Hotel importing is a decision considering finance, operations, marketing, sustainability, human resources and risk management.

The first main idea is that cost alone is not enough. An item that is imported may reach a supplier price. The final cost is increased upon addition of transportation, duties, taxes, insurance, customs fees and variations in the exchange rate.

It shows that the importance of relationships with suppliers. Liao (2013) stresses trust, interdependence and teamwork. Aksoy and Akın Ateş (2019) show that strategic buying and supplier development are essential.

Upon closer examination the digitization being an increasing importance. E-procurement provides the visibility necessary to manage buying networks. However Kothari et al. (2007) Show that having processes and readiness, inside the organization is also important.

the resilience is now a goal. The COVID-19 pandemic proved that supply chains built around efficiency can be broken by big disruptions. Hotels have to balance efficiency and supply security.

The sustainability is being woven into buying decisions. Green supply-chain studies show that environmental concerns are becoming more important when choosing suppliers and evaluating purchasing performance.

11. CONCLUSION :-

Import practices are becoming an essential part of today's hotel management. By sourcing hotels can buy special items, well-known international brands, high-tech equipment, unique comforts and goods that may not be easy to find at home.

Yet buying from away brings many worries. These worries include tariffs, strict customs rules, changing exchange rates longer delivery times, reliance on one supplier, transport dangers, quality issues, money risks and questions about sustainability.

The studies we looked at show that hotels are moving slowly from buying habits to smart buying plans. Electronic buying, helping suppliers grow, buying, having several suppliers, managing risk and making the supply chain stronger are all becoming key parts of modern hotel buying.

Eight more studies that we added show that hotel importing is driven by things that're not part of normal supply-chain rules. Taxes change the price; what customers say and think changes what items are chosen; a recession changes how much is bought; smart management changes how well the hotel runs; how change is handled affects whether new buying systems are used; money health changes buying choices; and staff issues affect how well the hotel works.

The main point is that good hotel import management needs a balance among price, quality, how easy it is to get, risk being green what guests want and how well it fits the hotel's goals.

Hotels should not bring in goods just because they are from another country look fancy or seem cheap. Instead hotels should look at the cost what guests need, how the hotel runs, how good the supplier is, how laws are followed, the effect on the planet and long-term goals when they decide to import.

In India in smaller towns this topic gives many chances for new research. Comparing buying inside India, with buying from abroad looking at how tariffs and rates change things how to manage supplier risk how green buying works and how import habits affect a hotel's profit could add a lot to hotel-management studies.

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